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ORGANIZATION OF CONSTRUCTION IN THE USSR

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1. Each industry in the USSR maintains its own construction section and carries out its own program, based on the current five year plan. There is no central construction agency as such. In addition, various cities have a construction agency.

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2. Each industry maintains an engineering staff, usually very competent, which designs and supervises the construction undertaken by that industry. Of course, all plans on proposed construction must be approved by the Director of the particular industry and finally by the Minister. Because of many changes in personnel and inefficiency, organisation as such is bad.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

3. A certain amount of money is ear-marked in each five year plan for public buildings. Of course, such construction receives a much lower priority than industry. Schools, hospitals and institution buildings are placed ahead of housing projects. Theaters receive a high priority because of the value as a means of disseminating propaganda.

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4. Housing projects, [] were negligible. Most of them were conducted by various industries to provide quarters for workers. Such quarters were usually of a barracks type.

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5. In Stalino, [] 24-family unit cooperatives. These were constructed for members of the Engineering and Industrial Institute. Approximately 2000 rubles were paid by each individual. The additional funds were provided by the city. These two cooperatives were the beginning of a widely publicized huge housing project. As is common in the USSR, inefficiency, changes in personnel on high level and the fact that no one in the USSR cares to make a decision, the whole project ended after two units were built.

MATERIAL CONSTRUCTION

6. I believe that construction in the USSR is very good, with some exceptions. New methods

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and plans are constantly being "borrowed" from abroad.

7. Heavy industrial construction and extra large institution buildings are usually of concrete and steel. Public buildings are built of brick. Whereas two to three brick thickness was used in the old days, today brick construction is of one-brick thickness. The cement mixture used varies, of course, depending on the type of work, a rule of thumb usually being satisfactory. For good work, however, the German mixture of O-00-000 is used, providing the best adherence. All materials and construction in progress are carefully inspected.

COST

8. It is very hard [] to give information on construction costs in the USSR. In the first place, the value of the ruble is [] just what the government wants it to be. Secondly, much slave labor is used. Third, everything used in construction is drawn from a central agency. Therefore, in my opinion, actual cost means nothing. The most important item is availability.

STANDARDIZATION

9. Insofar as design is concerned, all construction of buildings follows a simple, Soviet style. Basic construction is pretty well standardized, following fixed requirements. Changes are frequent, however, as new methods from abroad are copied.

BUILDING CODES

10. There are rigid requirements for wiring, fire escapes, fireproofing and roof construction. In the large cities, buildings, properly fireproofed, are attached. In smaller communities, they must be detached. There is no set size for construction, this depending on use, materials and money available.
11. There is very little private home construction. If an individual lives on a collective farm he can, if material is available, build himself a small, unimproved hut or house. If not, he makes it of mud.

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IMPORTANT PROJECTS

12. The only important construction projects [] were those at Stalinograd [] and Dnepropetrovsk, where many heavy industries were started. Most heavy industrial construction has moved to the Urals []

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